

Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

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INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

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LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MASS ET SO US

SUBJ: SOMALI-ETHIOPIAN RELATIONS

REF: A. ADDIS ABABA 5344; B. STATE 097391

1. SUMMARY: WE THINK AIR DELIVERY OF LIMITED AMOUNT OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO ETHIOPIA WOULD BE BETTER DETERRENT TO SOMALI ADVENTURISM THAN INFORMING GSDR OFFICIALLY OF OVERALL DIMENSIONS OF OUR NEW MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO IEG. END SUMMARY.

2. WE NOTE FROM REF. A THAT ETHIOPIANS STILL EXPRESS VERY

GRAVE CONCERN OVER IMMEDIATE SOMALI INTENTIONS AND CLAIM TO HAVE VERY GOOD INFORMATION ON THE SUBJECT. WE OURSELVES DO NOT HAVE KIND OF "INSIDE INFORMATION" IEG CLAIMS TO HAVE. ALL WE CAN JUDGE BY IS OUR ESTIMATE OF OVERALL TACTICAL AND STRATEGIC SITUATION, ATTITUDE OF SOMALIS WE SEE, AND WHAT OUR DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES (INCLUDING ETHIOPIANS) HAVE BEEN ABLE TO PICK UP. ALL OF THE ABOVE ARGUE AGAINST SOMALI MILITARY ACTION, ESPECIALLY BEFORE AND DURING SUMMIT, BUT SIAD'S EXPECTED CON-
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TINUING PROMINENCE IN OAU - AS CHAIRMAN FOR 1974-75 - WILL RE-

MAIN A (SOMEWHAT LESS STRONG) FACTOR AGAINST MILITARY ADVENTURISM. DISCUSSIONS AT SUMMIT WILL AFFECT GSDR ASSESSMENT OF POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF MILITARY ACTION. AS OF NOW, IT IS STILL OUR ESTIMATE THAT THE SOMALIS WILL NOT SEE IT TO THEIR NET ADVANTAGE OF MAKE MAJOR MILITARY MOVE AFTER THE OAU SUMMIT UNLESS THINGS GET A GOOD DEAL WORSE IN ETHIOPIA. OF COURSE, WE CANNOT BE SURE.

3. APPEARS TO US THAT AIR DELIVERY OF MODEST RPT MODEST AMOUNT OF EQUIPMENT TO ETHIOPIA MIGHT HELP LESSEN SOMALI TEMPTATION TOWARD MILITARY ACTION. IT WOULD BE SYMBOL OF CONTINUING US SUPPORT TO ETHIOPIA AND WOULD PRESUMABLY TRANSLATE QUITE QUICKLY INTO HEIGHTENED ETHIOPIAN MILITARY CAPABILITY TO RESIST ATTACK.

4. WE THINK SIGNAL OF THIS KIND WOULD BE MORE EFFECTIVE DETERRENT TO SOMALIS THAN INFORMING GSDR OFFICIALLY OF DIMENSIONS OF OUR NEW MILITARY ASSISTANCE/SALES TO ETHIOPIA. GSDR WOULD PROBABLY SEE LATTER AS "70 MILLION DOLLAR PACKAGE" RATHER THAN LIMITED INCREASE IN EXISTING ASSISTANCE LEVELS WITH ACTUAL DELIVERY OF ARMS SPREAD OVER SEVERAL YEARS. IT THUS COULD SEEM TO GSDR AS ARGUMENT FOR EARLY MILITARY ACTION IN MONTHS BEFORE A LARGE AMOUNT OF NEW EQUIPMENT COULD BE ASSIMILATED INTO ETHIOPIAN INVENTORY.

5. BEST COURSE, IT SEEMS TO US, WOULD BE FOR GSDR TO BE TOLD IN GENERAL TERMS THAT WE ARE CONTINUING TO HELP ETHIOPIANS WITH DEFENSIVE ARMS, AND FOR THEIR INTELLIGENCE TO DETECT AIR DELIVERY OF SOME ITEMS.

KIRK

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